

deep water. Mallard, however, which have always been very local here, have for some reason been scarce even in their usual haunts. Of the residents, a very noticeable feature has been the large number of Spotbill seen this season, since formerly they were not common here; the numbers seen have been reminiscent of the south of India.

11, AURANGZEB ROAD,  
NEW DELHI,  
January 9, 1956.

O. H. DE ST. CROIX

[It may be interesting to mention that Mr. N. A. Leslie of Karachi in a letter dated 17th December, 1955 wrote: 'As to your query about duck and snipe, I do not myself shoot, but my shooting friends say that snipe are about in unprecedentedly large numbers this year. As for duck, the complaint both here and in the Punjab is that there is so much water about after the floods that duck are hard to come by, scattered as they are over a far larger area. There seems to be no evidence that they are less plentiful than usual'.

Mr. H. C. Grieve of Calcutta in a letter dated 5th December also writes that duck are scarce but snipe plentiful.

Lt.-Col. E. G. Phythian-Adams in a letter dated 24th January 1956 writes: 'I was down in Mysore last week and found remarkably few snipe—not a quarter of what one expects to find at this season. Duck and teal too were very scarce. Can it be that most of the birds are still up north on the flooded areas? Or is it that as all our Mysore tanks are brim-full (at any rate in South Mysore) there is not the usual amount of duck-weed, etc.? I notice also that practically no migrant birds of prey are to be seen, either on the plateau or down below. Their absence is very noticeable'.—Eds.]

13. A LARGE INDIAN KITE, *MILVUS MIGRANS LINEATUS*  
(GRAY), WITH A SPLIT BILL<sup>1</sup>.

(With a text-figure)

Of the large number of specimens of birds handled by me during the past several years in connexion with my studies, the most curious bill formation I have come across is in a specimen of the Large Indian Kite, *Milvus migrans lineatus* (Gray). The specimen is an adult female, collected at Chisapani Garhi, about 15 miles to the south-west of Kathmandu, Nepal, on the 26th July 1947, by Dr. Walter Koelz, and deposited in the American Museum of Natural History, New York. It possesses an additional process to its bill. This is a fixed, rounded, apparently solid structure with a rhamphotheca. It originates dorsally from the base of the upper mandible, and arches gently over the culmen, leaving a well-marked gap at its base. It tapers to a point a little short of the tip of the bill. The height of the bill at cere is smaller

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